

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SB 6177

As Passed House:
March 2, 2004

Title: An act relating to criminal impersonation.

Brief Description: Increasing penalties for criminal impersonation.

Sponsors: By Senators Eide, Brandland and Winsley.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Criminal Justice & Corrections: 2/20/04, 2/25/04 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/2/04, 94-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Increases the penalty for criminal impersonation in the first degree and criminal impersonation in the second degree.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 7 members: Representatives O'Brien, Chair; Darneille, Vice Chair; Mielke, Ranking Minority Member; Ahern, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Kagi, Pearson and Veloria.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

I. Criminal Impersonation

A person is guilty of criminal impersonation in the first degree if he or she:

- Assumes a false identity and does an act in his or her assumed character to defraud another or for any other unlawful purpose; or
- Pretends to be a representative of some person or organization or a public servant and does an act in his or her pretended capacity with intent to defraud another or for any other unlawful purpose.

Criminal impersonation in the first degree is a gross misdemeanor.

A person is guilty of criminal impersonation in the second degree if he or she:

- Claims to be a law enforcement officer or creates an impression that he or she is a law enforcement officer; and
- Under circumstances not amounting to criminal impersonation in the first degree, does an act with intent to convey the impression that he or she is acting in an official capacity and a reasonable person would believe the person is a law enforcement officer.

Criminal impersonation in the second degree is a misdemeanor.

II. Criminal Penalties

In general, the following punishments apply to misdemeanors, gross misdemeanors, and unranked felonies:

- Misdemeanors are punishable by imprisonment in jail for up to 90 days, a fine of up to \$1,000, or both.
- Gross misdemeanors are punishable by imprisonment in jail for up to one year, a fine of up to \$5,000, or both.
- An unranked felony is punishable by up to one year in jail, a fine (of up to \$10,000 for class C felonies, \$20,000 for class B felonies, and \$50,000 for class A felonies), or both.

Summary of Bill:

The penalties for criminal impersonation are increased. Criminal impersonation in the first degree is increased from a gross misdemeanor to an unranked class C felony. Criminal impersonation in the second degree is increased to a gross misdemeanor.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect on July 1, 2004.

Testimony For: There have been recent reports of young ladies being pulled over by fake police officers. This bill sends a strong message that we will not put up with this type of behavior. Making the penalty for criminal impersonation stronger will send a strong message to these perpetrators.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Eide, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.